



Surplus pesticide and container disposal

AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS NO. 3

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Surplus pesticides

We are faced with the choice of pesticide storage or disposal when the use of certain pesticides is discontinued or when we have surplus pesticides at the end of a growing season. Storage presents problems, as discussed in our Agricultural Chemicals Fact Sheets No. 1, Fire Hazards of Stored Pesticides, and No. 4, Pesticide Storage and Formulation Shed. Disposal is also a problem because we currently do not have a satisfactory means for disposing of large quantities of pesticides in Minnesota.

High temperature incineration (1650° F.) appears to be the best potential disposal technique, but we do not have all the necessary information nor the necessary incinerators at this time. Using incinerators without adequate scrubbing to wash the contaminants from the exhaust would result just in another source of air pollution. Both the water and air effluents need to be monitored constantly to assure us that such as incinerator is performing properly. Many incinerators only will handle liquids. There also is doubt as to the proper disposal of the ash from pesticides following incineration.

Small quantities (no more than 1 gallon of liquid or 5 pounds of solid material) of surplus pesticides can be buried in properly supervised sanitary landfills approved by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Contact this agency for information on current approved sanitary landfills when you have pesticides to dispose. Remember, these areas are not to be used for disposal of large quantities of pesticides. Large quantities, buried in one place, may complicate pollution problems and reduce the chance for breakdown by chemical degradation and microorganisms.

Minimize your pesticide disposal problems as follows:

1. Don't overstock. Obtain pesticides for the current season only.
2. Try to arrange the return of large containers of pesticides to your supplier in case the pesticides are not needed.
3. Use pesticides that will "breakdown" quickly.
4. Minimize purchases of pesticides that are likely to be restricted.
5. Mix only enough pesticide for your immediate needs. If you have some left over, try to use it elsewhere as instructed for Minnesota.

Pesticide containers

Combustible containers, as well as small (5 gallons or less) noncombustible containers, should be buried in a supervised sanitary landfill, as recommended above for pesticides.

Combustible containers should no longer be destroyed by burning in Minnesota. Such burning may contribute to air pollution.

Do not puncture aerosol or pressurized spray cans or bombs.

Empty pesticide containers should never be salvaged for reuse for any purpose. Such reuse is never worth the chance that trace amounts of pesticides remaining in the containers may be enough to harm people, pets, livestock, and wildlife.

To dispose of 15, 30, or 55-gallon metal containers, tighten all bungs and closures. Transport the container, or arrange for its transportation, to a pickup point previously designated by a professional drum reconditioner. The containers then will be reconditioned professionally.

The following reconditioning procedure is utilized by many professional drum reconditioners; it satisfactorily destroys any pesticide remaining in containers:

1. Heads are mechanically removed from tight-head drums.
2. Drums are upended and heated by direct flame in a special drum furnace to 1000° F. or more for about 10 minutes.
3. After cooling, drums are sandblasted or shotblasted to remove all traces of foreign matter, both inside and outside the drum.

A list of National Barrel and Drum Association members and of other drum reconditioners having suitable burning facilities is available from the National Agricultural Chemicals Association or the Minnesota Agricultural Chemicals Association. Formulators are urged to request their customers to follow recommended decontamination procedures.

In Summary:

1. BURY 1 GALLON OR 5 POUND QUANTITIES (OR LESS) OF PESTICIDES IN APPROVED AND SUPERVISED SANITARY LANDFILLS.
2. RETURN LARGER QUANTITIES OF PESTICIDES TO THE MANUFACTURER OR STORE IT PROPERLY UNTIL A DISPOSAL METHOD BECOMES AVAILABLE.
3. BURY SMALL AND DECOMPOSABLE CONTAINERS IN APPROVED AND SUPERVISED SANITARY LANDFILLS.
4. SEND EMPTY METAL PESTICIDE CONTAINERS OF 15-GALLON CAPACITY OR MORE BACK TO THE MANUFACTURER OR TO PROFESSIONAL DRUM RECONDITIONERS.
5. OBSERVE SPECIAL LABEL INSTRUCTIONS RELATING TO DISPOSAL.

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